

Office of the SWIC Newsletter



Message from John T. Stevens, Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) & Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for FirstNet in NH



First and foremost is the safety of our first responders, our medical providers and clinicians, and all who are providing mission critical and essential services during this COVID-19 pandemic. To all who serve, please take every precaution to protect yourself and your family and friends from this scourge on society. We are not in this fight alone as witnessed by the global impact, but I have every confidence in our nation, the State, and our community leaders to minimize the impact, as much as it is at all possible and render solutions through pharmaceuticals and a vaccine hopefully in the not too distant future. Merely three weeks ago people were looking forward to Spring, but in a matter of days much of that has changed. Collectively, as we all serve the needs of our citizens, now more than ever we need to look out for one another.

The Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) supports the work of public safety and our partners who provide life-saving missions. New Hampshire is better positioned to provide mission critical services because of the previous and continuing work that the SIEC has dedicated itself to produce. Interoperability and the ability to communicate when disaster strikes is our key mission and at no time have systems and networks (LMR and LTE) been more vital than what we are experiencing today.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic many of the training opportunities (COML, COMT, COMU) sponsored by the SIEC in collaboration with the US Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), Technical Assistance (TA) Program have been rescheduled. Caution must also be taken that although schedules have changed (please check the SWIC Calendar), we may need to push the dates further into late summer, or fall, once we are certain that federal employees/consultants have been cleared to travel. We wish to congratulate however, Bobby Erskine and Rob Farley for completing their COML certification. Certificates were awarded at the SIEC quarterly meeting in February 2020.



Congrats Rob Farley!

Congrats Bobby Erskine!

Thanks to Carol Miller for the photo collage.

On February 14th, 2020 FirstNet/AT&T acknowledged the efforts made by New Hampshire over the past three years as a true collaboration in providing FirstNet capability to public safety agencies throughout the state, provided by its national carrier AT&T. A press event was organized and conducted at the New Hampshire Fire Academy that included presentations made by Governor Sununu, FirstNet CEO Ed Parkinson, Owen Smith AT&T President of Northern New England, NH DOS Commissioner Robert Quinn, John Stevens NH SWIC, and Chief Edward Garone of the Derry, NH Police Department. Acknowledged by FirstNet and AT&T, New Hampshire through the efforts of the SIEC, in particular the Data Communications Working Group, has excelled and was to be congratulated for the efforts being made to bring FirstNet capability statewide, aiding not only first responders and those associations that are critical in support of public safety during a disaster, but also providing ancillary broadband benefits to citizens throughout the state.



The result of having Governor Sununu and FirstNet CEO Ed Parkinson present was the recognition of the SIEC and all the work that is being performed. Whether it's the Data Communications Working Group, or the work of the Radio Frequency, or the Operations Working Group and the sub-committees that have taken on tasks such as Mutualink, COML, COMT, COMU, or AT&T Deployable assets, to name just a few, is the acknowledgement of the overall success and commitment that is being made by the SIEC membership.

Please note that the next quarterly meeting of the SIEC is due to meet on May 8th, 2020. Only time will tell whether this meeting will need to be moved, or rescheduled, or whether we adopt a conference line to conduct and address current SIEC business until such time as we can all meet again in-person. We have attached a number of news worthy articles that we thought would not only be of interest, but also to provide some additional guidance when addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. We are now entering the new normal, when normalcy seems the farthest from reality. The next few weeks will undoubtedly be difficult while this pandemic as expected, will see infection rates increase. It is our duty however, to follow social distancing instructions and to provide the leadership required to lessen its effects. I wish you all well and please take whatever precautions necessary to protect yourself and your families.

In the meantime, I encourage you to remain resolute and to be unwavering in your belief that we will return stronger than ever.

Best wishes,

John T. Stevens
SWIC

AT&T Announces Controlled Introduction of MCPTT Service

By Sandra Wendelken, Editor | Tuesday, March 31, 2020

AT&T announced new developments around the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) including a limited mission-critical push-to-talk (MCPTT) introduction, free smartphones with contracts and the first high-power user equipment (HPUE) certifications.

AT&T announced a “controlled introduction” of FirstNet Push-to-Talk (PTT), which the company called the first nationwide mission-critical standards-based PTT solution to launch in the U.S. The carrier said it was developed specifically for public safety, and public-safety agencies across the country, including the Cranford Police (New Jersey) Department, tested the FirstNet PTT service.

The service and first device are available nationwide now to eligible FirstNet subscribers. During the controlled introduction period, AT&T will deliver additional elements of the ecosystem, such as additional devices, an application and LMR interoperability. The initial release conforms to Third Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) Release 12 with support for Release 13 capabilities, an AT&T spokesperson said.

“Reliable communication is critical. It must work. It must be there when we need it,” said Capt. Guy Patterson of the Cranford Police Department. “And, it must be crystal clear because we don’t have time to repeat ourselves or introduce room for errors in fast-changing situations or when lives are on the line. Our experience with FirstNet PTT has been excellent. On more than one occasion, FirstNet PTT allowed us to effectively communicate when our traditional systems failed.

“Testing FirstNet PTT was an intensely promising experience, showing us the future capability, quality and performance we can infuse into our response to enhance effectiveness and collaboration.”

The carrier declined to share the exact number of agencies that tested the service, but both law enforcement agencies and fire departments were involved in testing. The carrier plans general availability before the end of the year.

AT&T said in a statement that FirstNet PTT is designed to enable public safety to use smartphones, feature phones and specialized ultra-rugged devices similar to how they would use a two-way radio, with highly reliable, high-performance calling. FirstNet PTT will also deliver new features that allow first responders to better react to changing events.

The controlled introduction of the FirstNet PTT service includes launch of the Samsung Galaxy XCover FieldPro, with more devices available later this year. The Galaxy XCover FieldPro is a highly secure device equipped with PTT capability and features that make it suited for use by first responders across all public-safety disciplines, the carrier said.

“Together with AT&T, we continue to deliver America’s first responders much-needed public safety broadband infrastructure, as well as an entire ecosystem of mission-centric tools and capabilities,” said FirstNet CEO Ed Parkinson. “PTT based on open 3GPP standards is a key milestone for FirstNet and public safety. The FirstNet Authority has worked diligently to represent public safety and ensure their critical communications needs were recognized within the global standards development process. We look forward to continuing to work with AT&T and public safety to evolve the solution and deliver the tools they need for their lifesaving mission.” To help with public safety’s response to the coronavirus outbreak, AT&T said it expanded mapping visibility to FirstNet Central, formerly known as Local Control. FirstNet Central is the primary service portal for FirstNet

subscribers. Now, public-safety administrators have access to the interactive coronavirus disease (COVID-19) dashboard created by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University. Agencies can view confirmed cases in relation to their jurisdiction and couple this insight with the FirstNet Esri-embedded network status map, which now includes hospital and trauma levels, for better situational awareness.

In addition, AT&T announced that first responder public-safety agencies on FirstNet can get premium FirstNet Ready smartphone devices free for their agency paid users when they get a new FirstNet Mobile – Unlimited for Smartphone line of service or eligible upgrade with either a two-year service agreement or a new AT&T Installment 30-month agreement, along with other conditions.

The firstnet.com website lists a standard FirstNet — Mobile Unlimited plan for smartphones at \$39.99 per month. An enhanced plan, which adds Wi-Fi service, is \$44.99 per month.

Under a two-year installment agreement, subscribers could upgrade their smartphones with a new eligible smartphone every two years at no additional cost as long as the service plan is in effect and in good standing. The upgrade requires a new two-year agreement. For the AT&T installment 30-month agreement, subscribers could upgrade their smartphones with a new eligible smartphone every time they satisfy the current AT&T installment agreement and sign a new one for no additional cost for as long as the service plan is in effect and in good standing. For both plans, tax on full retail price is due at sale. Activation and other fees, taxes, charges and restrictions apply.

“First responders deserve a dedicated communications partner that can provide the tools they need, when they need them, and that’s exactly what they’re getting with FirstNet,” said Jason Porter, senior vice president, FirstNet Program at AT&T. “We are here working side-by-side with public safety and together we’ve made FirstNet nimble, adaptable and ready to scale for even the most severe situations as we’re seeing currently with COVID-19. Now, agencies spanning law enforcement, fire, EMS, healthcare, hospital emergency departments, emergency management and 9-1-1 operations can stay up-to-date with smartphones for life at no additional cost and know their responders’ devices are up to the task when the next emergency strikes.”

Starting April 1, individual first responders who sign on to FirstNet and pay for their own service can get a \$200 activation credit when activating a new FirstNet Ready smartphone on a new FirstNet First Mobile-Responder plan.

AT&T also certified Assured Wireless’ embedded internet of things (IoT) module and USB-connected modem as FirstNet Ready in preparation for launching high-power user equipment (HPUE) solutions also later this year. Following 3GPP standards, power class 1 HPUE solutions can transmit stronger signals in 700 MHz band 14 than in other spectrum.

Devices that have a FirstNet Ready certification are those that will work on the FirstNet evolved packet core by installing a FirstNet subscriber identity module (SIM) card. Some FirstNet Ready devices may also require a software update, according to the firstnet.com website.

AT&T first announced plans for HPUE last year. AT&T is working with Assured Wireless and other OEMs to make HPUE functionality available on the many device types used by public safety, an AT&T spokesperson said.

HPUE devices can be used wherever band 14 has been deployed, and those areas continue to be built out. However, the Assured Wireless device is capable of using all of AT&T’s Long Term Evolution (LTE) bands,

so even if a user is out of a band 14 coverage area, the device can be used like a normal USB modem.

HPUE power class 1 solutions are permitted only on band 14 spectrum pursuant to 3GPP standards, so AT&T is the only carrier that can offer this particular HPUE service. The technology has been shown in field tests to increase the range of standard band 14 LTE signals by 80% and more than triple the coverage area of a base station. In addition, even at shorter distances, the reserve power provided by HPUE can optimize the signal to significantly improve data speeds, especially uplink speeds from the field.

Uplink speeds are important to first responders when uploading video and other data-intensive communications from the field. In rural areas where coverage has been sparse, spotty or nonexistent, FirstNet HPUE will provide connectivity. Even in dense, metropolitan areas, the technology will enable connectivity through thick skyscraper walls to deep interior locations such as stairwells, elevator shafts and below ground parking and offices, the spokesperson said.

FirstNet announced its contract with AT&T to build a nationwide public-safety broadband network (NPSBN) three years ago. AT&T launched the FirstNet dedicated network core two years ago.

<https://www.rrmediagroup.com/News/NewsDetails/NewsID/19484>

FirstNet Coverage, Apps, Devices Help Agencies Respond to COVID-19 Pandemic

Friday, March 27, 2020

AT&T outlined initiatives to help First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) subscribers respond during the COVID-19 pandemic. The carrier is adding coverage and devices where needed, and FirstNet apps are helping agencies better address response to the national emergency.

In Northern California, a medical center contacted FirstNet for device and network support. AT&T deployed a FirstNet cell on wheels (COW) to provide additional capacity and keep emergency personnel connected. The carrier sent FirstNet Ready devices to support critical care physicians and ER nurses, as well as remote workers and noncritical staff.

In the Northeast, one of the hardest hit areas of the country, AT&T deployed a FirstNet portable cell site and other devices to support a drive-through testing facility. The public-safety and emergency management teams were concerned about maintaining reliable communications when thousands of citizens arrive for testing. Medical professionals and first responders can interoperate across federal, state and local agencies, and are not competing with consumer smartphones and tablets for bandwidth in the drive-through facility.

In Texas, public safety requested FirstNet network support for a quarantine center at a military base. While there was quality coverage outside of the quarantine center, service was minimal within the quarantine zone. The FirstNet team at AT&T deployed a new in-building emergency solution to support dozens of first responders.

“It’s amazing to see and hear about the selfless sacrifices made every day by these public servants — the first responders, medical professionals and more who tirelessly serve our communities,” said Jason Porter, senior vice president, FirstNet Program at AT&T, in a blog. “I’m humbled by the role our company plays in serving these heroes, and I plan to share many more stories of the women and men supporting the incredible work of medical professionals and first responders at quarantine sites, trauma centers, and other areas throughout this great country.”

In addition, FirstNet subscribers are using applications from the FirstNet App Catalog to combat the coronavirus. The catalog identifies more than 100 highly secure apps tested for public safety that can help cost effectively enhance their situational awareness and other capabilities.

An EMS agency in Connecticut is using the Response for FirstNet app from Intrepid Networks for day-to-day operations and incident response management. With the app, the agency rapidly manages daily operations, segregates specific response operations for weather-related events, segregates data from training operations and communicates accurate information to all its responders.

The agency created a specific channel dedicated to COVID-19 related information. This information includes status updates on the spread of the virus, best practices to keep medics safe while responding to calls, and information relating to the acquisition of specific equipment related to COVID-19 issues.

The General Devices e-Bridge mobile telemedicine app has highly secure video telehealth and a COVID-19 Virus Screening module. This makes it possible for EMS and hospital providers to consult, assess and manage patients remotely to protect personnel and limit exposure. FirstNet customers Baystate Health in Massachusetts and AtlantiCare in New Jersey are using the GD e-Bridge telehealth video and screening module as part of their COVID-19 response and management. Pulsara allows networked communications across an entire community, including live video and messaging, and is providing its app at no charge to help with the COVID-19 pandemic. Regions across the U.S. are enabling Pulsara to help mitigate patient surges, limit transfers to clinically appropriate cases, minimize exposure to other patients and clinicians, conserve scarce personal protective equipment (PPE) and secure communication for outpatients in isolation (quarantine).

A sheriff's office in southcentral Texas is using FirstNet and the 10-21 Police Phone app by Callyo for its COVID-19 response. The 10-21 Police Phone app allows officers and deputies to place free phone calls to citizens using an unblocked number, thus more likely making them more likely to be answered. It also protects the officer's existing number, allows officers to connect citizens to dispatch when off-duty and can provide push notifications when called back. This is aiding the sheriff's deputies by giving them easy access to contact citizens and manage nonemergency situations.

<https://www.rrmediagroup.com/News/NewsDetails/NewsID/19479>

Interoperability in Action



This photo features two mobile command trucks deployed to support Hudson PD and Fire during the wake/funeral services in Hudson, NH on Feb 28th and 29th, 2020 at St. Kathryn Church for Air Force Capt. Ryan Phaneuf.

Have a news story you'd like us to feature? Drop us a line.
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